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SUMMER of
PRIDE



CONTENTS

LAVENDER

FEATURE: SUMMER IN THE CITIES

26: Golden Valley Pride

32: 2018 Summer in the Cities

40: Rainbow Sports In The Twin Cities

OUR LAVENDER

9 From the Editor

10 A Word in Edgewise

12 Lavender Lens

OUR SCENE

16 Arts: Spotlight

20 Travel: Memphis

24 Travel: Kansas City

OUR HOMES

44 Ride Review

OUR VOICES

47 Dateland

OUR RESOURCES

48 The Network

50 Community Connection

32



26



40



44



Page 32: Photo by The Hook and Ladder Theater, **Page 26:** Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery, **Page 40:** Photo by Larry Barthel, Triquetra Productions LLC, **Page 44:** Photo by Randy Stern.

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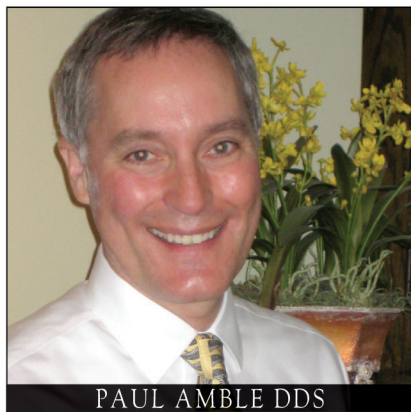


ON THE COVER

Drag superstar Alaska Thunderfuck will bring the house down at Muse Event Center on June 20.
Photo by Santiago Felipe

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Here's To 600 More

With Pride Month coming up, there's already plenty of reason to celebrate. But for us here at *Lavender*, we're giddy already, and that's because we've just hit a major milestone with our 600th issue!

A lot has changed for both *Lavender* and the rainbow community since June 1995, but one thing that hasn't changed is our dedication to representing and servicing this community. It's our utmost privilege to be there for you, and here's to 600 more amazing issues!

On top of that, welcome to our 2018 Summer in the Cities issue! Winter is finally over... I think... and there's a ton of awesome events and parties for the Twin Cities to partake in over the summer season. So we've put together a fabulous Summer in the Cities guide, which runs the gamut from a Pride Yacht Party and a Prohibition Swing Night, to the 20th anniversary

celebration of eagleBOLTbar and the Twin Cities Jazz Festival. So if you're looking for fun stuff to do in the hot summer sun, look no further!

Also, we take a look at the festivities of the Golden Valley Pride Festival, as well as rainbow sports events in the Twin Cities, represented by the North American Gay Volleyball Association, and the Twin Cities Good-time Softball League.

And of course, as we're winding up for Pride, a friendly reminder that our June 7 Pride issue will be officially unveiled at Lavender's First Thursdays Happy Hour and Summer of Pride Kickoff Party at the incomparable Psycho Suzi's Motor Lounge! Don't forget to stop by, have a tiki drink, meet some awesome business and nonprofit vendors, and meet our Pride cover star! The countdown to Pride begins now! ■



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MINNESOTA REMEMBERS
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It's Too Darn Hot!

When I moved from Alabama to Minnesota I gloated, “Now the summers will be cool and I won’t live in fear of deadly tornados!” As Bogart remarked to Claude Rains in *Casablanca*, “I was misinformed.”

In the summer, temperatures can be higher here than they are down in Jasper that same day, the humidity wrapping both in an identical sodden, unbreathable blanket. There are tornados; I’ve seen entire streets and neighborhoods scoured by twisters, and Wednesday siren drills go off regularly, just as they do down south. Google informs that tornados arrive “from March through November,” while “the peak month is June followed by July, May and August.”

I don’t do change well, and another discovery was that Minnesota has a temperature variance of 174 degrees Fahrenheit—third, after North and South Dakota of the non-mountainous states. At the risk of sounding like a fragile, hothouse flower, I’ve determined that there are roughly 17 days a year when I willingly entertain the thought of going “outdoors.”

I have friends who chomp at the bit for winter, beseeching the spirits for enough sustained Arctic weather for Lake Superior’s ice caves on the

Apostle Islands to be accessible, creeping across the ice in the dead of night.

But I digress from summer, that fleeting season wedged between “Too Cold” and “Too Cold Again;” the weeks, perhaps even a couple of months, when the weekend of spring erupts into “Too Darn Hot!”

Sartorially, summer begins just after the first crocuses and robins are decimated by a withering frost and the blighting, “last” snowstorm. A few weekends back, a sky-full of snow dumped onto the land. One Monday, we woke to 18 inches of the white stuff, vanished by the following Monday, and the populace emerged sporting tank tops, shorts, and sandals.

Sailboats will skim the 10,000 lakes, ice cream stands tout their wares, bicyclists, hikers, swimmers, and sports aficionados accompanied by their faithful canines will broil under the sun.

Viewed from indoors, or on a shady patio sipping an iced beverage, this Minnesota is, indeed, lovely. I urge one and all to participate—before midge, mosquito, and blackly season—preferably within sight of some shady venue where I can kick back, order another cold beer, and cheer you on. ■



A TWIN CITIES PBS ORIGINAL

Our LGBTQ+ past comes out of the closet

TPT 2 Wednesday, June 6 at 8:30pm

Stream anytime at tpt.org/outnorth

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LOBBY DAY FOR LGBTQ EQUITY AT MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL

APRIL 19, 2018



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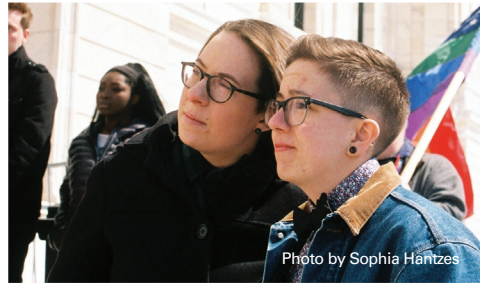


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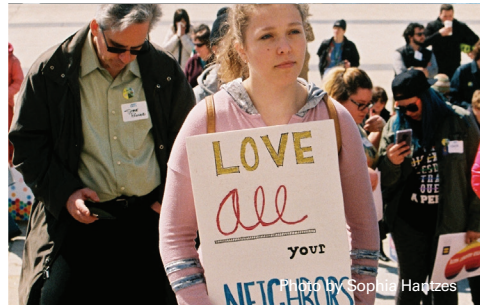


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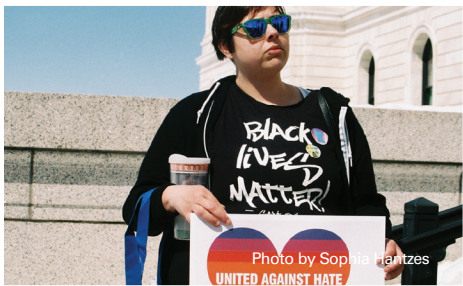


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BINGO A-GOGO'S ROYAL WEDDING BINGO

APRIL 28, 2018



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Dana Orr, RN

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

Through June 3

Guthrie Theater, 818 S Second St., Minneapolis
612-377-2224

www.guthrietheater.org

42 years ago, the Guthrie Theater produced its last production of Henrik Ibsen's political drama masterpiece, *An Enemy of the People*, in a translation by John Patrick Vincent. Two years ago, playwright Brad Birch's adaptation was first produced in Wales and Scotland. His new and expanded version has been described as a political thriller and has been directed at the Big G by Lyndsey Turner of the National Theatre of Great Britain. She is the third female director to have won the Olivier Award for Best Director in its 42 year existence, London's equivalent of the Tony Award.

An Enemy of the People is widely considered to be a quintessential view of the interplay between public policy and pollution. The Guthrie's Artistic Director, Joseph Haj, who oversees play selection, points out that "Henrik Ibsen embraced social issues of his day head-on in his writing. *An Enemy of the People* was written 136 years ago, yet Brad Birch's bold adaptation has found new relevance in today's world. It's thrilling to bring this story to life for our Guthrie audiences, and I'm delighted to have Lyndsey Turner at the helm."

Moreover, *An Enemy of the People* contains one of drama's great conflicts between brothers. Billy Carter of Broadway's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* plays whistleblower Dr. Thomas Stockman. Ricardo Chavira plays conservative mayor and brother, Peter Stockman. Chavira played Stanley Kowalski in the Guthrie's *A Streetcar Named Desire*



An Enemy Of The People. Photo by Dan Norman

and played major role as Eva Longoria's husband, Carlos Solis, in one of the most popular television series of this century, *Desperate Housewives*.

DAT BLACK MERMAID MAN LADY/THE SHOW

June 1-17

Pillsbury House Theatre, 3501 Chicago Ave.
Minneapolis

612-825-0459

www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org

2018 is a major year for new transgender performance work at major Twin Cities theaters, and it stands to reason that the socially conscious Pillsbury House would be a part of that. Acclaimed theater artist Sharon Bridgforth creates a fantastical processional stage work that draws from Yoruba spirituality. She shares, "In *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady/The Show*, gender is this/and, neither/or, that. Reflecting ancient Black wisdom that was free of forced gender pronouns—here the living, the dead and the unborn pray forward next generation healers/Free. The stories, the rituals/Love is in support of everyone Living Fully as themselves. Gender complexities are essential in conjuring Divinity here."



dat Black Mermaid Man Lady/The Show. Photo by Rich Ryan

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Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill.
Photo by William Clark

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL

May 24-June 24
Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S
Minneapolis
612-822-7063
www.jungletheatre.com

Billie Holiday (1915-1959) ranks as one of the most legendary of blues singers. She began her singing career in Harlem clubs and went on to become one of the most distinct musical voices of the 20th century. Drugs and alcohol factored into her life and she contended with racism during the Jim Crow era. *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* features the gifted Thomasina Petrus in the title role with a live band. This award-winning play with music, written by Lanie Robertson, has been noted for its insights into Holiday's personal struggles and character. Directed by Obie-winner Marion McClinton.

LORD GORDON GORDON

Through June 3
History Theatre, 30 E 10th St., St. Paul
651-292-4323
www.historytheatre.com

The dream duo that gave us the comic musical, *Glensheen*, a few years ago, has teamed up again with another high stakes oddball story. *Lord Gordon Gordon* portrays a mysterious gentleman who arrives in Minneapolis in 1871. He claims to be born of Scottish aristocracy in order to swindle the gullible into

phony land deals. Minnesota's most widely produced playwright, Jeffrey Hatcher, and composer Chan Poling, renowned for *Love is the Law*—the same sex marriage campaign anthem—tackle a wild true life story that involved a million dollar bribe.

Hatcher says, "The farther back in time the story is set, the more leeway we have. We know a lot about the people Gordon bilked: Minneapolis Mayor George Brackets, Congressman Loren Fletcher, Col. John J. Loomis, presidential candidate Horace Greeley and the tycoon Jay Gould, men who are depicted in oil paintings and daguerrotypes. We knew little about the Beldens, the New York couple who befriended Gordon in

Minnesota and introduced him to New York society."

Poling adds, "I think a hallmark of a 'Hatchling' production is he will use any device to keep the story flying high, you never know what's going to happen next; it could be quite silly and surreal one moment, and next your heart is touched deeply."

Director Ron Peluso says, "What a wacky slice of history! Who better to uncover and play than through the imaginations of Hatcher and Poling. People were eager to be in (Lord Gordon Gordon's) circle. They loved him, adored him, and, willingly, they gave him their money to invest in his dream of creating a new city out on the western prairies."



Lord Gordon Gordon. Photo by Scott Pakudaitis

DISNEY'S NEWSIES

Through Sept. 29

Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, 501 W 78th St.

Chanhassen

952-934-1525

www.chanhassendt.com

Newsies is an inspiring story of children and youth, males in particular, standing tall against labor exploitation. In 1899, homeless, orphaned, and other economically disenfranchised New York City boys would sell newspapers in order to simply survive. When the owner of the New York World newspaper raises the price on the papers, it means the youngsters' cut will be significantly lower, plummeting them below the already subsistence level of livelihood. This compels them to strike and defy the powers that be. The 1992 film starring Christian Bale went on to develop a passionate following before it was eventually adapted for the stage.

At Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, the musical version of *Disney's Newsies*, that was nominated for eight Tony Awards six years

ago, is kicking up its heels in a wonderfully cantankerous production choreographed by Tamara Kangas Erickson on their main stage. Director Michael Brindisi has a sharp eye for musicals set at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century. His recent productions of *Mary Poppins and Hello Dolly!*, like *Newsies*, beautifully combine both a vivid sense of nostalgia and deep feeling that stretches beyond mere sentimentality. This blend is quintessentially Brindisi. His interpretations of popular musicals are consistently entertaining while simultaneously tapping into a rich reservoir of deep emotions.

This blend, along with a soulful script by gay master playwright, Harvey Fierstein, leads to terrific *Newsies* performances such as gritty Aleks Knezevich as the young buck protagonist and movement leader, Jack Kelly. This charismatic character leads the boys in their rage against the Pulitzer-owned machine that systemically moves to grind them further down into the metaphorical pavement. Knezevich is absolutely luminous in the role and is matched with equal luminosity by Ruthanne

Heyward as his romantic interest, Katherine, the resistant young journalist with a secret. The class privilege differences between the two are quite pronounced, increasing the romantic intensity.

Thomas Schumacher is fittingly callous as the tyrannical Joseph Pulitzer. Lucas Wells endears as Crutchie, the disabled youngster willing to take on the machine. Kersten Rodau is in top transcendent form as Medda Larkin, a veteran entertainer with a compassion for the kids' plight. She is a vision right out of the gay '90s, costumed gorgeously by Rich Hamson. Moreover, Hamson's costumes overall are pictorially perfect reflections of the era.

Erickson's choreography crystalizes the overwhelmingly young male ensemble as they embody stirring youthful machismo. They are impeccable in their dance execution. All voices throughout are first rate as they spirit forth Alan Menken's music and Jack Feldman's lyrics. Conductor Andrew Bourgoin's musicians are also first rate and impeccable. ■

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The Stax Recording Studio, now a soul music museum in Memphis.

Memphis, Soul of the South

What makes hearts beat in Memphis? Is it the rich heritage of America's favorite music, or its forefront push for civil rights?

Trick question, because the answer is yes, because the two are forever intertwined. And both were born because King Cotton ruled the land. The Memphis Cotton Exchange was the Wall Street of the South, where traders sold those bales to the mills of England. Today it tells that story as the Cotton Museum, detailing the sorry life of the slaves who made their masters' fortunes and the songs they wailed as instruments of survival: birth of the blues.

The blues are alive and well on Beale Street, the city's original African-American hub. Recalls B.B. King, "It was like a village, where we helped each other: shops, cafes, clubs. It's where everybody came on a Saturday night." Still is. The stretch dances with neon (including B.B.'s own club) as music lovers roam from club to club.

Close by, the Rock 'n' Soul Museum plays out the musical gumbo that put Memphis on the map: songs of black sharecroppers; gospel ringing from their churches; jazz, blues and country that rocked their radios. Listen to those legends via the museum's jukeboxes.

Radio wove the bond between blacks and whites, led by black musicians like B.B. King at WDIA, the station playing the provocative Rock and Soul that seduced white listeners—doing for music what, later, Dr. Martin Luther King would do for civil rights. Step into the re-

cording studios themselves, starting with Stax, launched in 1957 in a back-street garage and today memorialized in a vintage movie theater that unreeles the story of black and white musicians, "integrated in a highly segregated city. Going to Stax was like going to church," its director declares. Count Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes and Aretha Franklin as members of the choir. But MLK's assassination changed all that. And Stax went under.

Sun Studios started a music revolution, instructs tour guide, Tiffany, when in 1957 Sam Phillips launched the record company that brought rock 'n' roll to the world.

"Roy Orbison, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash all recorded right where we're sitting," Tiffany gushes. Anyone could plunk down \$4 and cut a record, and that's what a country boy named Elvis did at age 18, crooning "My Happiness." But Sam hated—hated!—ballads, so wouldn't grant the kid an audition. Finally Elvis sang some blues for Sam, tweaked with a country twist: "That's All Right" was so all right that the local radio DJ spun the record 14 times back to back.

Three years later, in 1957, those hips were swiveling on TV, and at age 22, Elvis bought Graceland for \$100,000. He redecorated it, as you'll see on tour, in perhaps the worst taste in Tennessee: the infamous Jungle Room, complete with waterfall, fake fur upholstery and green shag from floor to (and upon the) ceiling, along with 14 TVs (three in the den)



Hail to the King, baby—The famous Graceland mansion owned by Elvis Presley.



The Shiloh National Memorial Park pays tribute to those who died in a Civil War battle outside of Jackson, Tennessee.

and the first microwave in Memphis. Adjoining buildings display his famous jumpsuits, pink Cadillac, fancy Ferrari and private plane; the story of his Army days and tepid comeback in 1968—all larger than life, as was his heart. Pause at the King's grave for a moment.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ➔

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The "I Am A Man" mural in Memphis, where the movement and march originated.

Then turn to the story of another King—MLK—on the 50th anniversary of his assassination in the Lorraine Motel, which now serves as the National Museum of Civil Rights. Renovated in 2014, it calls on vivid testimonies by African-Americans who endured myriad indignities and worse, starting with the beginning of the slave trade in 1619; by 1850, four million people were enslaved. Watch newsreels, listen to speeches, hear the sirens and the screaming as the push for freedom gains momentum with boycotts and marches. Climb aboard the bus in Birmingham where a driver sends you to the back. Walk with hundreds who marched at Selma, and in Washington, D.C. Take a stool at a lunch counter sit-in. Peer into the jail cell where Dr. King wrote his famous letter.

When Memphis' sanitation workers went on strike—proclaiming together "I Am a Man"—Dr. King came to town to join them... and was shot in his hotel room, right where we stand, his suitcase open as he left it.

"I've seen the promised land," he preached, and while he didn't reach it, he worked so others could. (For an insider's glimpse, step back onto Beale Street into the studio of Ernest Withers, MLK's personal photographer, to view an exhibition of his touching, candid shots.)

A bright light in slavery's shameful story is illuminated at Slave Haven, a museum of the city's underground railway housed in the modest home of German immigrant Jacob Burkle, just two blocks from the Ohio River's course to freedom. Today, its rooms are filled with ads of former slave markets (Memphis had 12); branding irons, neck shackles and photos, later on, of the KKK. The rooms also are rich with slaves' signals for escapees' risky journeys north: the



This segregated rural schoolhouse was attended by music icon Tina Turner, and currently houses her costumes and gold records.

language of quilts, hung on wash lines; of yard jockeys, whose lanterns sent messages; of talking drums and church songs: "They weren't about religion, but about freedom," reveals tour guide Elaine Turner. "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" translates to 'Run, duck low, and hop a wagon.' They didn't bring slaves out of Africa," Turner clarifies: "They brought Africans out of Africa." The lucky ones found shelter under the trapdoors in Jacob's house.

Today's black community is celebrated in the ebullient I Am a Man mural on South Main Street, anchoring what's fast becoming downtown's Arts District. Just beyond, headlining my favorite art form, stands 99 Cent Soul Food. Its counter-service menu showcases Southern staple vegetables like baked yams, butter beans, black eyed peas and mac & cheese (yes, in Tennessee it counts as a veggie), along with fried chicken (add \$5) and catfish (add \$8). Plus banana pudding, the queen of Soul desserts.

Cross the street to slurp a few at Pearl's Oyster Bar, or amble a block west to Gus's World Famous Fried Chicken (he's not lying), a shack easily spotted by the line out the door.

WEST TENNESSEE

"BestTennessee," the locals correct my pronunciation, and point of view. Jackson, two hours from Memphis, offers a hometown base. Along the way, pull over at Brownsville, where the West Tennessee Heritage Center unspools the region's relations to King Cotton and to queen of the music scene, Tina Turner. The black kids' schoolhouse she attended now houses her costumes and gold records. Union City's Discovery Park of America—an "if you build it" site in the middle of nowhere—lures 250,000 visitors a year to its eclectic exhibits, ranging from earthquake simulator and space station to dinosaur bones. Reelfoot Lake was born of an earthquake and today boasts a state park for a pontoon or kayak ride through its cypress stumps to view turtles, eagles and camo'd fishermen.

From Jackson, step back to pre-history at Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park to an enclave of Indian mounds from 200 B.C.E. to 500 A.D., erected for ceremonial occasions. Then snag lunch in Savannah at old-time general store The Outpost; consider their homemade pies an essential part of your MDR. In nearby Savannah, I happened onto a BBQ cook-off, requiring me to taste close to a dozen life-altering samples. (Somebody's gotta do the dirty work.)

History buffs, Shiloh's calling. The national park is site of the first big, and bloody, battle of the Civil War (23,000 casualties), where the North unloaded green, untrained men at the river's Pittsburg Landing to march onto Southern troops billeted in the forest. A film details the generals' strategies for the two-day battle, after which we trace a 13-mile loop past cannons, pyramids of cannonballs and monuments, including Minnesota regiment's, near the Hornet's Nest, named for its volley of bullets. Visit www.tnvacation.com to plan your visit.

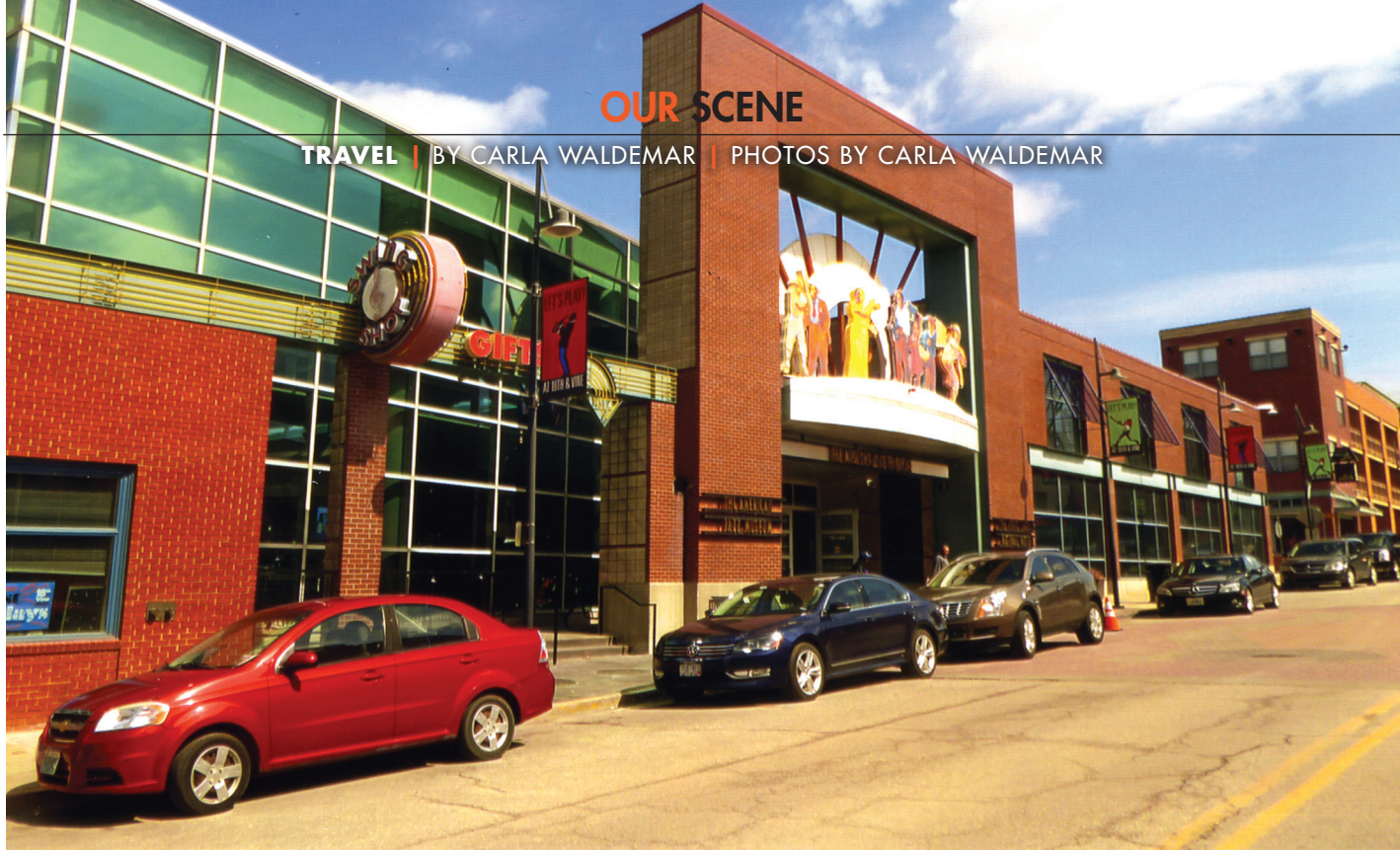
You crave 'cue? (If not, check your pulse.) At Central BBQ the bones slide from meat that's moist and tangy, while at Rendezvous, it's all about dry rub and sweet tomato sauce, emanating from an alleyway near the patrician Peabody Hotel—famed for its parade of ducks from its lobby fountain, orchestrated by an official Duckmaster in full regalia.

Back on Main, the Majestic, occupying a former movie palace, still shows vintage films while you dine on the steak of your dreams. Or head to brand-new Gray Parrot, aside an also-new distillery, whose vodka highlights the Parrot's shot-cum-oyster to get you in the mood. The forward small-plates menu gallops from scallops with radish and pineapple sabayon to octopus with garbanzos; pig ear and salsa verde; and kohlrabi in grapefruit butter with kumquats and celery root. Does it satisfy, or simply shock? Stop in and decide. To help, visit www.memphistravel.com. Midtown is boys' town and home to the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (www.mglcc.org). ■

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Located on 18th and Vine are the Negro Baseball League Museum and the American Jazz Museum.

KC's Calling You

Honk if you love barbecue. Even better, head to Kansas City. Here, close to 200 pit masters fire up the oak and hickory to flavor anything and everything you can maneuver onto a grill. A mixed marriage in these parts involves a fan of no-frills Arthur Bryant's (including everyone from Count Basie to Bill Clinton) wedded to a devotee of Gates—a bit more genteel, as hinted by its logo of a gent in a top hat. Jack Stack serves tasty ribs and brisket in a more refined setting (cloth napkins!), and contest-winner County Line just launched a second location in the entertainment district called Power & Light.

A couple of newbies are shaking up tradition with a contempo style of 'cue, leading off with Q39, dream-come-true of a big-time contest winner, as evidenced by a wall of blue ribbons. Here, a mountain of ribs, brisket, sausage and burnt ends comes sided with choices like white bean cassoulet and coleslaw infused with apples. Same for Char Bar, where, to side my brisket sandwich I chose kale-pecorino slaw (told you!) and a carrot-raisin-cabbage mix, following server Shannon's tip ("You're gonna love me for recommending this"). Char Bar even grills

jackfruit to welcome vegetarians to the party.

EJ's debuted by a classically trained chef, who returns to his roots with 'cue aplenty, catfish, and that Southern standby, meat & three. I succumbed to his primo brisket and burnt ends, sided by modern threes like Parmesan-squash casserole, fried green tomatoes, and (not a three but an irresistible fourth) bread pudding with Bourbon sauce.

But KC doesn't live on bones alone, not by your James Beard medals. Corby Garrelts, a Best Chef Midwest winner for Bluestem, recently added Rye to his repertoire, showcasing "food I grew up on. It's actually OK to like these things again." Case in point: his best-selling fried chicken. Chicken and dumplings. Hush puppies. Livers and gizzards. Quail with corn bread pudding and braised greens. Pies are an old-time religion here, as worshippers of his banana cream and lemon meringue wonders do swear.

Beard winner Michael Smith put KC on the dining map when he headed the famed American Restaurant. Now he favors far less fussy (and more interesting) dining at his Extra Virgin, celebrating Asian-to-Latin flavors in small plates like fried chicken on Chinese steamed

buns, woodfired poblano mac & cheese, and chicken stuffed with fig and chorizo. Venture to his Odd Bits menu for duck tongue tacos ("I go through 35 pounds a week") or pigs' ear salad. Don't miss the churro doughnuts served with hot chocolate sauce, or you'll be sorry.

Antler is a sweet storefront where small plates rule: carrot salad with lardo and hazelnut pesto; agnolotti pasta with savory chestnut cream; cavatelli noodles in robust lamb ragu; scallops aside rutabaga schnitzel and red-eye aioli. Black Dirt opened just weeks before my visit, but they've already got it pitch-perfect with small plates such as a Missouri Caesar (croutons of breaded fish); scallops paired with grapefruit and cauliflower; duck fritters jumping with poblano cream; and octopus gone retro with Green Goddess dressing. Tom's Town Distilling Co. not only conjures up classy cocktails in a Prohibition setting, but offers tours with tastings of its premier spirits. Nearby Hotel Indigo, also brand-new—a chic makeover of a railroad office, now sporting velvet fainting couches—charmed me with a breakfast menu highlighting Eggs Bennie with crab cakes and asparagus.



A covered wagon at the National Frontier Trail Museum in Independence.



A divine barbecue feast at the new Midtown Q39 restaurant in Kansas City.



The entrance to Kansas City's River North Farmers Market.

From there, hop the new, free (!) streetcar to River North, to patrol the marketplace's food stalls, ranging from Indian to Brazilian, beignets to cannoli, and produce touted by an ardent Italian nonna as "sweet, lotta juicy." Peer into Dutch Market for all things over the top, including a "Move, bitch" bike bell and a towel declaring "As a matter of fact, I was raised in a barn."

Hop the rails again to the Crossroads, the sexy SoHo (and boys' town) of the city, to patrol its indie galleries and shops. Continue to the Union Station stop to explore the station itself, vast as Grand Central and just as lively. Nearby Crown Center is home to many of the city's creatives, employed on Hallmark's 75-acre campus. Free tours spell out the story of the greeting card company launched in 1910 by J.C. Hall from his room in the Y. Stroll along a timeline of greeting cards (including those by Grandma Moses and Norman Rockwell) and decorated Christmas trees.

Across the street, the iconic tower of the World War I Museum (the only one in our nation) offers a 360 view of the city. The museum is so engaging that a ticket includes a second visit. Join a tour that circles onward from

1914: weapons, newsreels, propaganda posters and warfare in the trenches, where each side lodged, stalemated, for four dreadful years. Gas warfare, machine guns, bomb attacks, submarines: more firsts. Accounts climax with the U.S. entry in the war's final year, before a last exhibit, which asks, "Is peace possible?"

A proposed expansion of the streetcar line may stretch to Country Club Plaza, a vanguard shopping enclave when launched in the '20s, with homage to Seville, Spain: tiles and fountains galore. From there, it's an easy stroll to the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, whose lawn sculptures includes Claes Oldenburgh's enormous shuttlecock. A new extension hosts a spectacular gift of 29 mostly Impressionist works from a private collection, including never-seen paintings by Renoir, Degas, Matisse and Van Gogh interwoven with the museum's existing collection. Recently opened: "The Big Picture," showcasing photos donated by the Hall family and Hallmark's collection—historic Steichen and Lange to moderns Diane Arbus and Cindy Sherman.

An Uber hop leads to the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures' collection, which can be captured in one word: enthralling (adult visitors

far outnumber kids) with scores of tiny mansions exactly built on the scale of 1:12. Peer at a candle the size of a pin; tiny doors with tinier hinges; miniscule drawers that open; a cello strung with human hair. Continue upstairs to ogle toys through history (including Cracker Jack prizes)—china dolls to Raggedy Ann and Barbie. The first Tinker toys and Lincoln Logs.

A vibrant slice of KC history is celebrated at 18th & Vine. That intersection was the beating heart of its Black community, with its heyday in the '30s. Today it celebrates two side-by-side museums: the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum. The Leagues flourished from the '20s to the '50s when ballplayers, like the famed KC Monarchs, were heroes: teams of Black players who—during segregation—were forbidden to travel and dine in white enterprises. Remembers one, "We'd often ride all night, and hungry." And the crowds went wild. Recalls an old-timer, "Everybody would get dressed to the nines to go to the ballgame." Local Buck O'Neal made history as the first Black coach in major leagues in 1962, joining the Chicago Cubs. KC native Jackie Robinson famously integrated national leagues in 1947...and those new opportunities put the Negro League to rest.

The American Jazz Museum celebrates Blacks who performed at 18th & Vine, from Duke Ellington and Count Basie to Sarah Vaughan. A film recounts a later successful boycott of downtown establishments, where Blacks couldn't try on clothes nor eat at lunch counters.

For more of that can-do history, head to Independence, half an hour and many decades distant. Here, the National Frontier Trail Museum is celebrating the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail, which took off around its courthouse, crammed with covered wagons, hucksters and brave (or foolish) pioneers. The museum's display of diaries spells out ensuing hardships with accounts like, "Say to all my family: Stay home." Later, Harry Truman became his hometown's hero. Visit his home, the Truman Library, the haberdashery shop where he toiled. Or head to the jail where flamboyant outlaw Frank James held court. Something for everyone—and that's KC's lure. To plan your visit, check out www.VisitKC.com. ■

Gay KC

PrideFest 2018 is June 1-3 at Berkley Riverfront Park (special rates at Hampton Inn & Suites in Country Club Plaza)

Gay-owned eateries include Bistro 303, Café Trio and Ragazza.

Gay bars include Ruin Pub, Dempsey's, Missie B's, Sidestreet Saloon and Hamburger Mary's.

More info: www.VisitKC/lgbt.



ON GOLDEN PRIDE

BY KASSIDY TARALA

The Golden Valley Pride Festival will take place on Sunday, June 10 at Golden Valley's Brookview Park.

The third annual Golden Valley Pride Festival is going to be heating up the summer this June to celebrate its diverse community. Starting at noon, the event will run until 6 p.m. with music, live performances, food trucks, a beer/wine garden, activities for kids, community booths, and an interfaith church service at Spirit of Hope Church.

"Golden Valley is a very diverse and welcoming community, and we wanted to celebrate this openness to diversity by creating an excel-

lent event that brings our community together in support of all. Each year, it's powerful to see so many of our neighbors, businesses and civic leaders come together for a day of family entertainment and fun," says public relations consultant Mary J. Prevost.

Prevost says the festival has been so successful each year because community members really love their city, so they enjoy getting involved in a celebration of their city and the growing diversity in the community.



The Golden Valley Pride Festival will feature a number of booths, live performances, food trucks, and family-friendly activities. Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery



The Golden Valley Pride Festival will take place on Sunday, June 10. Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ➔



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“According to census data from the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, more gay couples, married or unmarried, reside in Golden Valley than any other city in Minnesota. The 2010 census results show 22 out of every 1,000 Golden Valley households—or 2.2 percent—self-identified as gay. This number is expected to be up to 15 percent higher because some households may not have chosen to identify themselves,” she says. “Additionally, the City of Golden Valley has led the way in its early support for equality and marriage and was one of the earliest adopters of a civil union registry.”



The 2010 census reportedly showed that 2.2 percent of Golden Valley households self-identified as gay.
Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery

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As in prior years, the Golden Valley Pride Festival will take place at Brookview Park. Photo by Jeff Schadt Imagery

With so much to be proud of, it's no wonder that Golden Valley Pride Festival is such a success for the community, including GLBT community members Kimberly Lang Sanberg, Chad Bulloch, and John Sweet.

Sanberg says her family moved to Golden Valley five years ago when their son was 18 months old.

"It was especially important that we find a community where our family—a family with two moms—would be welcomed. All of our neighbors, from the young kids to the folks in their 90s, have been completely welcoming of our family since we moved here. We love it here," she says.

She says Golden Valley has a reputation for being a very open, welcoming community where everyone enjoys attending the Pride Festival, including city council members, the mayor, and state legislators.

"I've gone every year. I was one of the founding planning committee members, so I've been involved since the first annual Golden Valley Pride Festival in 2016," Sanberg says.

She recommends bringing the whole family to Pride Festival and biking or walking if possible. There is also a shuttle service available, she says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ➔



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“The Golden Valley Pride Festival is so fun. There’s something for everyone and it’s very family-friendly. There are great food trucks, community booths, kids’ activities, music, and a beer garden. It’s a great opportunity to come together and celebrate the GLBT community in Golden Valley,” Sanberg says.

Bulloch says he and his husband also found Golden Valley to be extremely welcoming. He says every neighbor, business and city worker has been more than nice in every way.

“Pride Fest here in Golden Valley is a very welcoming gathering of not only the GLBT community, but our straight allies, as well. We enjoy seeing

the businesses that choose to participate in the Pride Fest and have done our best to push business their way,” Bulloch says.

Bulloch says he has attended Pride Fest with his husband since they moved to Golden Valley two years ago, and they plan on continuing to attend. For newcomers, Bulloch says there’s only one thing you need to bring: an open mind.

“I would recommend coming with an open mind. I was astounded by all the support of our neighbors across the city. They brought their children, their grandparents, and I’m sure their other neighbors, as well,” he says.

According to Sweet, Golden Valley is a “progressive part of town,” but it can be easy to forget how progressive it is because being known as gay in Golden Valley has never been an issue for him.

“We are surrounded by straight neighbors that have the yard signs stating, ‘All are

Welcome Here,” Sweet says.

Sweet and his husband have attended Pride Fest twice, and they plan on attending this year, too. The first time they were just visitors, but they went the second year to represent Sweet’s clinic Hennepin Healthcare at their booth.

“It’s great to see local businesses large and small celebrating Pride. It makes you appreciate the neighborhood store that wants to show their support,” Sweet says.

Sweet says if you’re planning on going, you should bring your friends and an appetite.

Not only do community members attend, but they are also deeply involved in the planning process of Pride Fest, says Prevost.

“Our festival, now in its third year, is privately funded and organized. We rely on

volunteers to make the event a success. Our volunteer planning committee is made up of more than 20 volunteers who have been planning the event since November,” Prevost says. “On the day of the event, we rely on the support of more than 50 volunteers to keep the festival running smoothly.”

Prevost says they are looking forward to seeing the work of the Golden Valley community pay off with their third annual Pride Fest.

“Each year, we are thrilled with the high level of community businesses and individuals who have offered financial contributions to our great event,” she says.

For more information on how you can help, either through your time, talent or treasure, visit: www.goldenvalleypride.com. ■



A beer and wine garden and an interfaith church service will be featured at the Golden Valley Pride Festival. Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery



The festival is privately funded and run by a volunteer planning committee. Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery



The Golden Valley Pride Festival had its inaugural celebration in 2016. Photo by Jeff Schad Imagery

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2018 SUMMER in the CITIES

BY KASSIDY TARALA

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Pride Yacht Party. Image by Cameron Yang

PRIDE YACHT PARTY-
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What better way to celebrate Pride than on a boat? Come to the third annual Pride Yacht Party in Stillwater for live entertainment, dancing, cocktails and more. Hosted by Faded Productions, the Pride Yacht Party will take you on the Majestic Star for a trip along the St. Croix River. Bon voyage!

ONE HEARTLAND FUNDRAISER ART SHOW IN NORTH LOOP- June 2

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The nonprofit One Heartland will be hosting a special art show fundraiser to raise money for its summer camps catering to GLBT and HIV/AIDS-affected children, Camp True Colors and Camp Heartland. Running from 4-8 p.m., the fundraiser will take place at Jeromeo in the Loop in the North Loop area of Minneapolis, and will feature resplendent artwork by acrylic artist Kenya Verrett and watercolor artist Manish Kalra.

EDINA ART FAIR-
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If you're a lover of art or



East Central MN Pride. Photo by Phil Schroeder

you're just looking for a fun outing with the family, the Edina Art Fair is a great way to enjoy the summer weather. With various art including paintings, sculptures and even face painting for the kiddos, the art fair is going to be your go-to spot to entertain the kids—and yourself. Food and drinks are also available for purchase.

EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA PRIDE-
June 3
Pine City Town Square

Pine City, MN
Free admission
www.eastcentralminnesotapride.org

Since 2005, East Central Minnesota has been bringing colorful Pride to Pine City every first Sunday of every June. With fun games, activities, entertainment, and, of course, food, East Central Minnesota Pride is perfect for anyone looking to celebrate themselves and have a great time while doing so. Don't forget to bring the kids!



Prohibition Swing Night. Photo courtesy of The Hook and Ladder Theater

PROHIBITION SWING NIGHT- June 9

**Hook and Ladder Theater
Minneapolis, MN**

\$20-25

www.thehookmpls.com

Swing, jazz, and booze.

What's not to like? Come to the Hook and Ladder Theater for Prohibition Swing Night featuring beginner dance lessons with DJ Aidan Dunn. You're encouraged to come dressed in era-appropriate costume, so get creative! Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and beginner dance lessons will be at 8 p.m., followed by music starting at 9 p.m.

BENDELACREME'S INFERNO A-GO-GO- June 13

Minneapolis, MN

\$40

www.facebook.com/Flip-Phone

From 7 to 10 p.m. on June 13, the Muse Event Center is where you're going to want to be. BenDeLaCreme from *RuPaul's Drag Race* will be taking the stage with her Inferno A-Go-Go event. Fire, fun and rhinestones are a must! Grab your tickets before they're gone.

NORTHERN SPARK- June 15-16

Minneapolis, MN

Free admission

2018.northernspark.org

Two nights in Downtown Minneapolis... free? Yes,

please! From sunset to 2 a.m. both nights, you can enjoy this one-of-a-kind art festival while taking in the sights of the city. Fireworks, street art, and live performances will definitely bring your night to life.

STONE ARCH BRIDGE FESTIVAL- June 15-17

Minneapolis, MN

Free admission

www.stonearchbridgefestival.com

For a weekend of art and music right on Minneapolis'

beloved riverfront, the Stone Arch Bridge Festival is surely one you'll want to mark on your calendars. With various art shows, music performances, and car shows, this festival is perfect for the lover of, well, anything! Food and drinks will be provided by some local favorites, too.

MADONNA DRAG BRUNCH AND COSTUME CONTEST- June 16

Union Rooftop

Minneapolis, MN

\$11

www.facebook.com/Flip-Phone

If you say you don't love Madonna, you're lying. Strike a pose and come out to the Union Rooftop for a Madonna Drag Brunch and Costume Contest. The event begins at 10 a.m. with shows at 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. Whether you're a full-time material girl or you just want to be for a couple hours, this brunch will surely be just like a prayer.

ROCK THE GARDEN- June 16

Walker Art Center

Minneapolis, MN

\$74-300

www.rockthegardenfestival.com

Whether you're looking for some good music of beautiful views of the city, the Rock the Garden Festival is known as one of the best music festivals in the city. Come to the Walker Art Center and enjoy the sculptures, the paintings, the music, the beer, the wine, the views... I could go on. Performers for the festival include Feist, Father John Misty, P.O.S. and Chastity Brown.



Northern Spark. Photo by Dusty Hoskovec

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ➔



AN EVENING WITH ALASKA- June 20

Muse Event Center
Minneapolis, MN
\$33-65
www.facebook.com/Flip-Phone

What better way to celebrate Pride Week than *An Evening with Alaska*? Join Alaska Thunderfuck of *RuPaul's Drag Race* for two live singing sets featuring Max, Cee Cee Russell, Genevieve Ramona Love, Nocturna Lee Mission, Julia Starr, Sasha Cassadine, Symone Smash It, and Harrie Bradshaw.

TWIN CITIES JAZZ FESTIVAL- June 21-23

Mears Park
St. Paul, MN
Free admission
www.twincitiesjazzfestival.com

Come out to Lowertown St. Paul for a weekend of jazz and drinks. With performances by Tia Fuller, Nayo Jones, Aurora Nealand, and many more, this is an event for every jazz lover. If you're not a jazz lover but your partner is, don't worry! Just tell yourself you're coming for the food. After all, there are more food trucks than there are jazz singers!

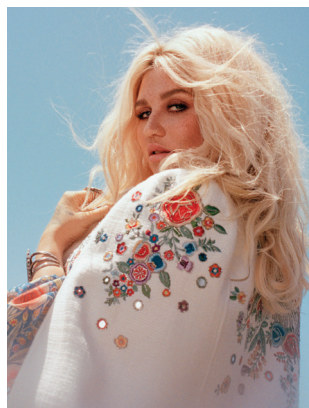
UPTOWN FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL- June 24

Minneapolis, MN
Free admission
www.uptownfoodtruckfestival.com

Food, drinks, and live music. Need I say more? Come to the Uptown Food Truck Festival, and you surely won't leave hungry. Between bites, enjoy some of the live music and performances, activities and games, or craft beers. Perfect for people of all ages, so bring the family!



An Evening With Alaska. Photo by Santiago Felipe



Kesha-Rainbow Tour. Photo courtesy of Mystic Lake

KESHA- RAINBOW TOUR @ MYSTIC LAKE- June 30

Mystic Lake Amphitheater
Prior Lake, MN
\$39
www.mysticlake.com

The queen of rainbows herself is coming to the Twin Cities! That's right, come to Mystic Lake for a night of glitter, love, and, of course, rainbows. General admission tickets only, so make sure you get there early to get a good spot.

MELISSA ETHERIDGE @ MYSTIC LAKE- July 5

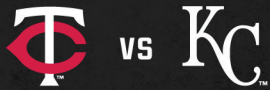
Mystic Lake Showroom
Prior Lake, MN
\$49-69
www.mysticlake.com

American rock legend and GLBT icon Melissa Etheridge will be taking the stage at Mystic Lake for a night of classics, celebration, and award-winning jams. Sing along to hits like "I'm the Only One," "Come to My Window," and "I Want to Come Over."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ➔

PRIDE

NIGHT AT TARGET FIELD



MONDAY, JULY 9



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ROOTS, ROCK & DEEP BLUES FESTIVAL- July 14
Hook and Ladder Theater
Minneapolis, MN
\$15-25
www.rootsrockdeepblues.com

The Shackletons, Dave Moore, Cornbread Harris, and many more... for only \$15-25? Who wouldn't want to go to that? Come to the Hook and Ladder Theater for the Roots, Rock & Deep Blues Festival this July. Enjoy classic jazz mixed with modern rock and everything in between.



X Games at U.S. Bank Stadium. Photo by Phil Ellsworth ESPN Images

ONE VOICE SHOW-TUNE SHOWDOWN IV- July 16
Park Square Theatre
St. Paul, MN
\$35-75
www.onevoicemn.org

Oh, it's on! Get ready for the ultimate singing smackdown as One Voice Mixed Chorus hosts the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Calliope Women's Chorus, and The Singers- Minnesota

Choral Artists in the fourth iteration of the Showtune Showdown. Join guest judges such as Sen. Scott Dibble, Lori Dokken, and host Erin Schwab as the choirs vie for a grand prize of \$1,000. The interactive event will also include a raffle, auction, and all the showtunes your heart can handle!

AQUATENNIAL- July 18-21
Minneapolis, MN
Free admission for most events
www.aquatennial.com

With parades, games, and a 5K, Minneapolis' Aquatennial knows how to do summer. Bring the whole family for a few days of nonstop fun at the Aquatennial. With lawn games, activities, parades, a 5K event, and even a blood drive, the Aquatennial does it all.

X GAMES- July 19-22
U.S. Bank Stadium
Minneapolis, MN
\$20-1,199
www.xgames.espn.com

Whether you're an athlete yourself, or you're more of a spectator who's there for the snacks like me, the X Games are an opportunity you won't want to miss! From sports like dirt biking, skateboarding, and Moto X, Minneapolis will be showcasing them all. Other events like concerts and game shows will be held throughout the weekend, too.



One Voice Showtune Showdown. Photo by Brent Dundore

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔

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JOURNEY/DEF LEPPARD/CHEAP TRICK- July 27

Target Field
Minneapolis, MN
\$34-1,695
www.mlb.com

Join some of the world's greatest rock bands for a night you won't forget. Sing along to classics like "Pour Some Sugar On Me," "Don't Stop Believin'," and "Faithfully" during what is being called "the tour of the year." Joined by Cheap Trick, Journey and Def Leppard are sure to bring you a night of nonstop rock.

MN FRINGE FESTIVAL- Aug. 2-12

Various venues
Minneapolis, MN
Prices to be announced in July



The Great Midwest Rib Fest. Photo courtesy of Mystic Lake

www.minnesotafringe.org

With over 1,000 artists showcasing their performance skills, the MN Fringe Festival is perfect for any and all thespians looking to be surrounded by pure talent. An annual event, the MN Fringe Festival brings budding performers and nuanced actors together to share the stage and exchange helpful tips.

JAY-Z AND BEYONCÉ- Aug. 8

U.S. Bank Stadium
Minneapolis, MN
\$49-1,993

www.usbankstadium.com

Attention: America's favorite couple is about to take the stage in Minneapolis! Come to the U.S. Bank Stadium on August 8 for a night with the one and only Jay-Z and Beyoncé. Whether you love

rap, incredible fashion, or you just want to be in the presence of royalty, this is a concert you'll want to put at the top of your list.

MN STATE FAIR- Aug. 23-Sept. 3

Minnesota State Fairgrounds
St. Paul, MN
\$9-14

www.mnstatefair.org

Music, rides, and, of course, Sweet Martha's Cookies are back for the season! Come out to the MN State Fair for a unique celebration of this great state. Whether you're looking for a thrill or two on some rides, up-close encounters with some of Minnesota's native animals, or some tasty food that will leave you full for weeks, the MN State Fair is a great way to send off summer 2018.

EAGLEBOLTBAR 20TH ANNIVERSARY- Sept. 7-9

eagleBOLTbar
Minneapolis, MN
www.eagleboltbar.com

Join one of the Twin Cities' premier GLBT bars, eagleBOLTbar, as it celebrates its 20th anniversary with a weekend of fabulous revelries. Stop by for great drinks, delicious food, dancing, and more. Here's to another 20 years! ■



Twin Cities Jazz Festival. Photo by Chris McDuffie

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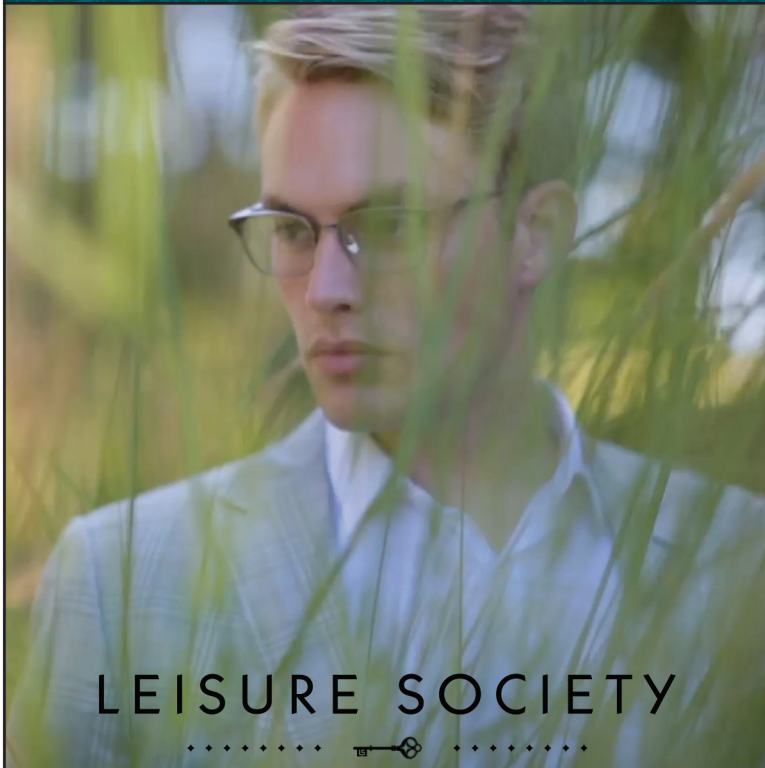
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GOOD TIMES WITH **RAINBOW** SPORTS

BY KASSIDY TARALA

Twin Cities prepare to host North Star Classic and North American Gay Volleyball Association tournaments.



Calling all sports lovers! The Twin Cities are going to be the place to be this month as we prepare to host two big sporting events in the GLBT community: the North Star Classic (NSC) Tournament and the North American Gay Volleyball Association (NAGVA) Championship.

NSC is an annual national softball tournament hosted by the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League (TCGSL), which is a member of the North American Gay Amateur Athlete Alliance (NAGAAA). According to NSC director Todd Trebesch, the Twin Cities' first openly gay softball team was formed at the Saloon in May 1979.

"The team was associated with the Minnesota Gay Athletic Association (MGAA), which had already established the 'Goodtime' bowling league and was sponsored by the Saloon. That summer, the softball team played several

*The Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League is a member of the North American Gay Amateur Athlete Alliance.
Photo by Larry Barthel, Triquetra Productions LLC*



The 2018 NAGVA Championships will be hosted at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Photo courtesy of NAGVA

charity games, including a game against the Minneapolis 'Blue' Team on July 29 at Parade Stadium," Trebesch says. "That Sunday, an estimated 400 fans overflowed the bleachers and stretched down the third baseline to support the Saloon team, and behind the team's bench were eight male cheerleaders with green and white pompoms. Another hundred fans sat in the first baseline bleachers in support of the Blue Team."

Trebesch says the Saloon team came out victorious at that game, which headlined on many local news stations as well as the *Minneapolis Tribune*.

"Later that summer, the team was invited to the third Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) held in Milwaukee that year over Labor Day weekend. The Saloon team placed second, losing to a Los Angeles team in the

championship game, 12-13. In January, 1980, the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League was established. The league adopted the name 'Goodtime' partly because of having a good time aligned with the league's mission statement, but also because in those days, it wasn't always safe identify as gay. In March 1980, the fledgling league was accepted as the seventh member of the North American Gay Amateur Alliance, the organization responsible for hosting the GSWS," Trebesch says.

After all of this success, TCGSL quickly established itself as a valuable member of NAGAAA, and it now contributes greatly to NAGAAA administration and competitions.

"In 1981, the league hosted its first national tournament over Independence Day weekend. The tournament

was comprised of 16 teams, and since has evolved into the North Star Classic. The tournament was hosted over Independence Day weekend every other year before landing on Memorial Day weekend and eventually becoming an annual tournament. NSC is celebrating its 25th tournament this year," he says.

Trebesch says TCGSL creates a safe environment for GLBT members of all ages. It provides an opportunity for athletes of all skill levels to get involved in the community while enjoying their favorite sports.

"This year, we will host our annual tournament that will include C & D divisions (4 brackets/tournaments). The tournament festivities start on Friday, May 25, with tournament play on Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27. In addition to the NSC, we will be hosting the NAGAAA Cup the

same weekend. The NAGAAA Cup is a A & B division tournament that is put on by NAGAAA each year," he says.

In addition to the fun of the NSC tournament, there will also be events hosted throughout the Twin Cities, including a registration party at the Saloon on Friday, May 25 (6-9 p.m.), featuring Saloon happy hour, a sports party at the Saloon on Saturday, May 26 until bar close, a closing awards ceremony at The Commons Park on Sunday, May 27 (6-10 p.m.), bar service provided by the eagleBOLTbar, and an afterparty at the eagleBOLTbar on Sunday, May 27 (10 p.m.-bar close).

Information for spectators: Games are played at three locations in the south metro and are free to spectators and the general community. Concessions will be available at all three locations including food, and beverages.



Locations:

- **Lexington-Diffley Athletic Fields:** 4201 Lexington Ave. S, Eagan, MN 55123
- **Northview Park Athletic Fields:** 980 Northview Park Road, Eagan, MN 55123
- **Lac Lavon Park Fields:** 15501 Lac Lavon Dr., Burnsville, MN 55306

Similar to NSC, the NAGVA volleyball championship is expected to bring sports fans to their feet! NAGVA is an organization of over 17,500 members in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

"NAGVA was started in 1983 by a small group of volleyball enthusiasts looking to provide a safe space for gay individuals to play the sport of volleyball. Since then, the organization has grown to include over 30 tournaments per year as well as the annual championships. NAGVA held championships in Minneapolis twice before, in 1989 and 1995," says NAGVA President Jason Fallon.

According to Fallon, volleyball is a very popular activity within the GLBT community. Many cities have local gay leagues with a wide variety of levels from the beginner to the advanced.

"Each year, NAGVA holds championships over Memorial Day weekend. This is the culmination of the season which runs from June through May each year. The championship is a time for players and the community to celebrate the sport of volleyball while having a diverse and non-exclusionary environment for everyone to



NAGVA previously hosted championship games in Minneapolis in 1989 and 1995.
Photo courtesy of NAGVA

be themselves without repercussions. Our championships is a three-day tournament and ends with a banquet Sunday night," he says.

Championships in Minneapolis are being held at the Minneapolis Convention Center in downtown in Hall E. There is no admission fee for coming to watch, and they strongly encourage the community to come out and watch the competition unfold. There will be concessions available in the Hall as well for both players and spectators.

"The best part is to see the competitiveness of every team, but also the diversity of the teams which come from all over the country, as well as Canada and Puerto Rico. Everyone can be themselves, which is such an important part of our organization. Even though the more mainstream the LGBTQ community has become, there are still instances where some are fearful to be themselves," Fallon says. "We pride ourselves to have a safe space for all participants, including our LGBTQ brothers and sisters and our straight allies. And to me, it's just great to see the community come together and celebrate diversity while enjoying the sport we all love: volleyball!"

For more info about the NAGVA Championships, please go to www.nagva.org/championships or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NAGVA2018. ■



The North American Gay Volleyball Association will host its championship tournament in Minneapolis over Memorial Day weekend. Photo courtesy of NAGVA



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2018 Honda Accord

The Honda Accord has always been a success here in the U.S.A.

When it arrived in 1976, the sporty hatchback gave Honda a much-needed boost thanks to its solid engineering, a larger version of its innovative CVCC engine, and practical design. From that point, the Accord made history repeatedly.

It was the first Honda built in the U.S.A. back in 1982. It also challenged conventional thinking in design and engineering along the way. As a result, it was a sales leader in this country. Because of its engineering and quality, there are a lot of Accords—of every generation—still on the road. Maybe you just happen to own one?

In recent years, the sedan has lost out to the SUV in terms of vehicle choice for individuals and families. It seems that drivers wanted to step up into an SUV rather than step into a car. They also wanted a higher driving position for better command of the road. Makes sense, except we saw sales of the most popular vehicles in this country drop in favor of the SUV.

To stem the tide, Honda introduced an all-new Accord. To do so, it went back to the reason why it was popular in the first place—being different in the face of convention.

How different is this new 2018 Honda Ac-



cord compared to its predecessors?

In short, this tenth-generation Accord follows a convention that has sustained this model through the years. The Accord is seen as a shape-shifter with extreme changes in its overall design instead of evolutionary progression. Instead, this Accord follows Honda's new design language established by the current generation Civic—a bold statement that disturbs

the sedan market.

The fastback design starts with a blunt front end. A large chrome piece crowns the upper part with a large lower grille designed for a massive intake of air. Two thin headlamp units flank the horizontal chrome piece with two lower units on the corners of the front fascia. All lighting is now LED, which emits a great beam of light at night.

Sweeping back is a rakish roofline that finishes off with a trunk. It may look like a hatchback, but we can point out other models which follow this fastback/non-hatchback convention, many of which have never been sold in the U.S.A. It is a completely different look and format for the Accord, which is really up for debate. The rear end is finished off with a LED taillight cluster that looks more conventional compared to the smaller Civic. Our Touring tester came with 19-inch alloy wheels that are as boldly designed as the rest of the car.

Underneath this fastback roofline is a cabin that is equally advanced. The instrument panel may be seen as minimalist, but it is not. Instrumentation is set in a full TFT screen with two large dials—one of which is the fully customizable Driver Information Interface. You can choose which bit of information you need to go along with the analog speedometer and other critical information in the middle. Our Touring tester came with a Head-Up Display that is also customizable—including a graphical tachometer with a digital speedometer. The idea behind all of this is to ensure that the driver is informed and not distracted by anything not in



view of him or her.

Attached to the instrument panel is the Honda Link infotainment screen. The tablet-like, eight-inch touchscreen is not exactly integrated with the interior design, but it is high enough for quick glances when necessary. This screen offers one of the best navigation readouts so far. Plus, each screen is logical and easy to navigate. Smartphone integration is available through Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Sound quality from the 10-speaker system is very good.

Climate controls are easy to use and understand, plus the storage area below it has wireless phone charging and a door to hide your phone from further distraction. The center console has the push-button, shift-by-wire transmission selector for our tester. Having used this before on other recent Honda and Acura models, it is logical once you use it properly.

The seats are comfortable and supportive up front. The roofline is a bit low, which means a few adjustments can be made with the Accord Touring's 12-way power adjustment for the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ➔

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driver. Rear seat space is excellent with plenty of head and legroom for six-footers. There are 16.7 cubic feet of usable trunk space that is expandable with the 60/40 split rear seatbacks.

The 2018 Accord offers three different power options. Standard is a 1.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine with 192 horsepower, along with an optional two-motor Hybrid driveline with a 212 total horsepower rating. Our Touring tester gets the new 2.0-liter turbocharged engine with 252 horsepower on tap. Though some Accord enthusiasts lament to the passing of the available V6 engine found on previous generations, the 2.0-liter turbo engine will make them forget it even existed. It is very powerful with loads of low-end torque—273 pound-feet to be exact. There is nominal lag from the turbocharger. This engine is the more exciting pick of this trio.

Connected to the 2.0-liter turbo is a 10-speed automatic transmission. It shifts smoothly and responds well to the engine. The Accord is a front-drive car, which offered plenty of traction—even through an April blizzard on low-profile all-season tires.

The most important part of the Accord is how it retains superb fuel economy. We were happy to see that our 252-horsepower, 2.0-liter turbocharged Touring tester returned an average of

29.2 MPG in our care. This is a massive improvement over the V6 Touring sedan we reviewed back in 2013 of almost 6 MPG! As we said before, this larger turbocharged engine replaced the V6 in the Accord lineup—something to think about!

Where the Accord truly shines is in its driving dynamics. The ride/handling mix is very good, offering a smooth ride, great handling, and cornering. You can switch to a Sport mode where the steering weight is heavier and the suspension firms up for even better control. The latter actually gives you some comfort when you need it the most.

The brakes are superb, offering excellent pedal feel and solid stops in normal, panic and, yes, winter conditions. Though we are in the month of May, we should consider anything our climate throws at us at the most unexpected times. Steering-wise, it has good on-center feel in all driving modes. We wished for a tighter turning radius in some maneuvers. Road feel is fine from the wheel, however.

Standard on all 2018 Accords in Honda Sense. This is the suite of active safety features that work with various sensors, including one tucked away in the lower grille of our tester. You do get Collision Mitigation Braking System, Road Departure Mitigation System, Adap-

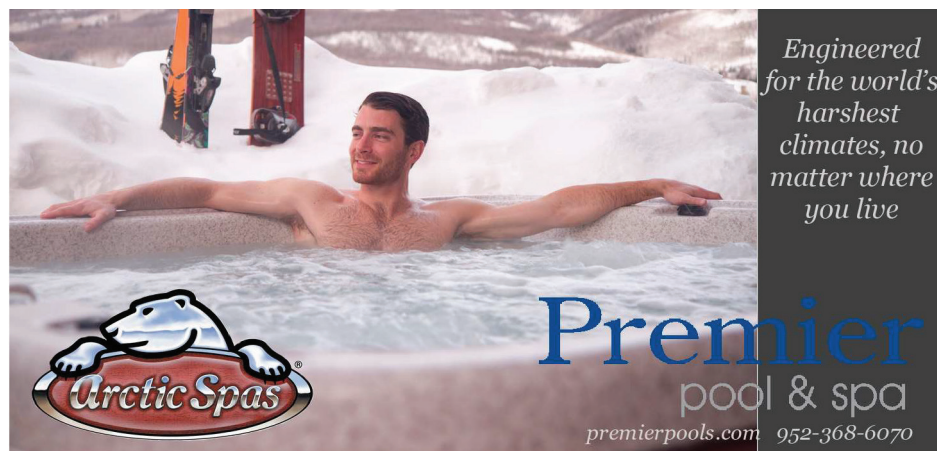
tive Cruise Control, Lane Keeping Assist System, and Traffic Sign Recognition among key features of this driver assistance suite.

The 2018 Accord lineup is available in twelve different models across five trim levels. The starting point is an LX sedan with the 1.5-liter turbocharged engine with a base price of \$23,570. Our 2.0-liter turbocharged Touring is at the top of the range, coming with a sticker price of \$36,690.

One thing became clear with the 2018 Honda Accord was how well executed this mid-sized sedan turned out. It offers the right space and the right mix of safety technology, distinctive design, performance, driving dynamics, and efficiency needed for today's mid-sized family sedans. Not to mention, it is the reigning North American Car of The Year.

As tempted as we are to compare to other 2018 mid-sized sedans, we would rather leave that to you. After all, it will be your preference and experience that dictates which vehicle to go with.

For a car with a 42-year history of shape-shifting, perhaps we needed something that disturbs the industry. Something that pushes the edge in design and engineering. The 2018 Honda Accord has become the most compelling sedan available today. It is worth checking out! ■



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Shanghai Madam

Last week, I received the following email message from my friend Scott: “New bio of Wallis Simpson released. Read immediately. Then discuss asap.”

Even though Scott is only ten years older than me, he prefers to live in the early part of the last century. His emails always read like telegraphs. He judges people harshly on the quality of their fine china. And he once tried to pull off a monocle until I told him it made him look more like Mr. Peanut than Lord Tennyson.

(Side note: I took the trouble to research famous people who wore monocles for this column because I care about accuracy! My columns are not fake news! Did you know that Radclyffe Hall and other members of the early 20th century lesbian smart set wore monocles? If I met one of these monocle-wearing broads at a Left Bank salon in the 1920s, I would have known immediately that they were trouble and would have steered clear. I have enough issues with women without adding impractical eyewear to the mix.)

I was less than enthusiastic about the news of a new biography of Wallis Simpson.

(For those of you who don't know what you should about the scandals that hit the British monarchy nearly 100 years ago, Wallis Simpson was the twice-divorced American whose love affair with Edward VIII resulted in his abdication.)

Simpson has always struck me as a high-end grifter, living from man-to-man and surviving on handouts from wealthy patrons. I need more depth in my heroines: scrappy upstarts who use talent and a can-do attitude to merrily overcome Dickensian childhoods, rotten husbands, and boozy public humiliations. Simpson doesn't seem to have any of these qualities, plus she subsisted on little but whiskey and water, and I'm suspect of anyone who doesn't enjoy food.

I do appreciate the fact that if it wasn't for her sexual manipulation of the British throne, we wouldn't have Charles and Diana and all the fun

(and tragic) royal scandals of the 1980s and 1990s that ran parallel to the much less celebrated—but equally dramatic!—romantic scandals of my young adulthood.

Wallis Simpson has always been a sore spot between Scott and me. He has long tried to convince me that she's fascinating. He dangled a rumor that she was a hermaphrodite, which I found mildly compelling until I discovered that her masculine features were more likely due to extreme diets and injections of monkey hormones than any creative biological impulse.

He also told me that Simpson had lured Edward into a sexual trap with techniques she learned under the tutelage of a Shanghai madam. I'll admit that I was intrigued enough by this rumor to buy the new biography to get confirmation. It would take real gumption to sail to China, track down a madam, and learn her trade.

Scott has served me as something of a Shanghai madam for the past two decades. He has taken it upon himself to guide me through a harrowing series of romantic travails, doling out advice that is short on practicality and has little application to modern lesbian wooing. His advice runs along the lines of: “Wear hat with veils! Women will think you're mysterious!”

None of his advice has ever helped me land a lady, but I have dutifully followed it because it's fun and interesting, which is more than I can say for Wallis Simpson. After reading the biography at Scott's urging, I learned that there was no Shanghai madam! No sexual trickery!

But I did learn that a Nazi diplomat once sent Simpson 23 carnations to commemorate the number of times they slept together.

“Who keeps track of such things?” I asked Scott during our book discussion.

“And with carnations!” he sniffed. “Maybe she wasn't as interesting as we've been led to believe.” ■

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Arts & Entertainment

Electric Fetus.....	21
Hennepin Theatre Trust.....	21
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts.....	19
Saint Anthony Park Arts Festival.....	21
Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus.....	17

Bars & Nightlife

eagleBOLTbar.....	31
Gay 90's.....	31

Beauty & Relaxation

The Clinic for Aesthetic Beauty.....	15
Rob's Place Salon.....	35

Beverages

Haskell's The Wine & Cheese Bar! ..	37
-------------------------------------	----

Breweries

Three Twenty Brewing Co.....	35
------------------------------	----

Casinos

Mystic Lake Casino.....	52
Treasure Island Resort & Casino.....	2

Event Venues & Services

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis.....	27
--------------------------------------	----

Events

East Central MN Pride.....	31
Lavender's Summer of Pride.....	4

Financial

Sunrise Banks.....	27
--------------------	----

Grocery Stores

More Than Sprouts.....	35
------------------------	----

Health & Wellness

Dr. Paul Amble, DDS.....	7
Steve Burns, PH. D.....	14
Edina Skin Care Specialists.....	29
Mill District Dental.....	13
Mint Orthodontics.....	17
Modern Eyewear.....	14
This Free Life.....	11
University of MN Minnesota, Infectious Diseases.....	45
Uptown Dermatology & SkinSpa.....	49

Home Furnishings & Accessories

2nd Shade Patio Furniture.....	51
Habitation.....	7

Home Services

House Lift Remodeler.....	37
Magic Carpets.....	43
Owens Companies.....	28
Standard Heating & Air Conditioning.....	43
TJB Homes Remodeling.....	8

Ice Cream

La La Homemade Ice Cream.....	15
-------------------------------	----

Insurance

Bartell, Dawn.....	46
--------------------	----

Jewelry

Arthur's Jewelers.....	7
Jewelry by Johan.....	8
Max's.....	47

Scheherazade Jewelers.....	21
----------------------------	----

Legal

Millot & Starks Law Office.....	39
---------------------------------	----

Media & Communications

Radio K - Real College Radio.....	46
Twin Cities Public Television.....	9, 10

Optical

InVision.....	39
---------------	----

Organizations

PFLAG - Mora/East Central MN.....	35
-----------------------------------	----

Pet Products & Services

Downtown Dogs.....	37
International Wolf Center.....	28

Real Estate & Rentals

Amy Ruzick, Kay Johnson - RE/MAX Results.....	39
---	----

Restaurants

A&W.....	35
Hi-Lo Diner.....	29
Mercy.....	17
Nicollet Diner.....	27

Sports & Recreation

Premier Pool & Spa.....	46
-------------------------	----

Transportation

Uber.....	3
-----------	---

Travel & Accommodations

Door County Visitor Bureau.....	23
---------------------------------	----

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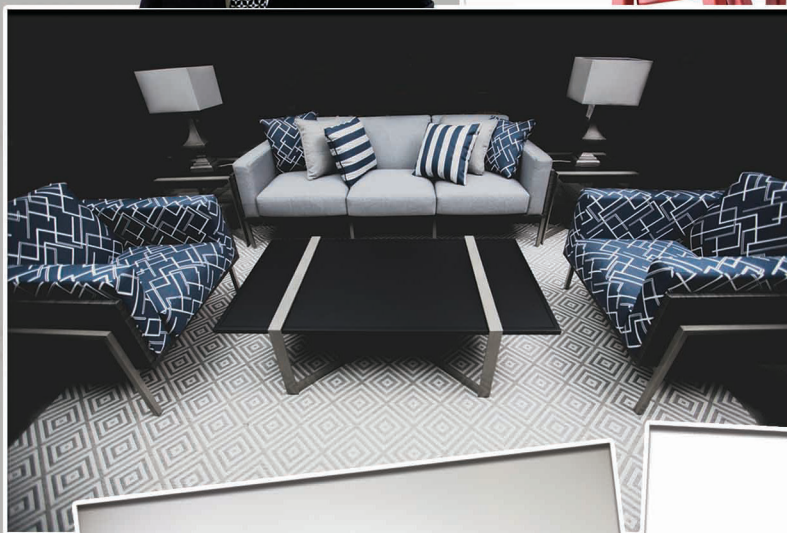
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